

Saratoga County Public Health Services (SCPHS): Protocol to Reduce Quarantine for Contacts of Persons with COVID-19 Infection Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing

Quarantine is intended to reduce the risk that persons infected with COVID-19 might unknowingly transmit infection to others. It also ensures that persons who become symptomatic or are otherwise diagnosed during quarantine can be rapidly brought to care and evaluated. Quarantine can impose personal burdens that may affect physical and mental health as well as cause economic hardship that may reduce compliance; discourage recently diagnosed persons from naming contacts; and deter contacts from responding to contact tracer outreach if they perceive the length of quarantine as burdensome.

When local circumstances and resources permit and when diagnostic testing resources are sufficient and available, CDC has indicated that a reduced quarantine period of 7 full days is an acceptable alternative if certain criteria are met. Testing for the purpose of earlier discontinuation of quarantine will be considered only when it will have no impact on community diagnostic testing. Testing of persons seeking evaluation for infection will be prioritized.

A list of testing sites is available at <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you> or by calling 888-364-3065.

Early Release Criteria

1. Appropriately Timed Negative Viral Test

Appropriately Timed Negative Viral Test: A negative COVID-19 viral test result from a diagnostic specimen. [Viral tests](#) include antigen tests and PCR tests.

- The test must be performed by a [laboratory permitted by the New York State Department of Health](#).
- The specimen must be collected no sooner than Day 5 of quarantine and within 48 hours of the time of planned quarantine discontinuation. Quarantine cannot be discontinued earlier than after Day 7. Day 5 of quarantine is defined as the fifth day after an individual's last documented close contact exposure to an individual infectious with COVID-19 ("last exposure"). For example, if an individual's last exposure took place sometime on September 1, the fifth day of quarantine would be on September 6. If a specimen collected on September 6 tested negative for COVID-19, the individual could potentially be released from quarantine after 11:59 PM on September 8.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Last determined close contact exposure to someone infectious with COVID-19		1	2 Quarantine Day 1	3 Quarantine Day 2	4 Quarantine Day 3	5 Quarantine Day 4
6 Quarantine Day 5	7 Quarantine Day 6	8 Quarantine Day 7	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
		Potential release after 11:59pm on Quarantine Day 7				
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

- The laboratory report must include the name of the laboratory, name of the individual tested and their date of birth, the date the specimen was collected, and the result of the viral test.
 - Self-administered, at-home tests are not eligible for this protocol.
2. The individual under quarantine has not developed any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 since their last exposure, including the entirety of quarantine up to the time at which quarantine is discontinued.

People with COVID-19 have had a [wide range of symptoms reported](#) ranging from mild symptoms to severe illness. Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Anyone can have mild to severe symptoms. People with these symptoms may have COVID-19:

- Fever or chills
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Fatigue
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Sore throat
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
3. The individual agrees to maintain continued vigilance against COVID-19 by adhering to the following conditions upon early release from quarantine and through Day 14 following their last exposure.
- **Masking:** The individual must wear a mask over the nose and mouth in the presence of other people, whether indoors or outdoors, except when eating or if the individual is <2 years old or has a condition for which a mask is not recommended (e.g., compromised breathing, inability to remove the mask).
 - **Symptom Monitoring:** The individual must remain alert for COVID-19 symptoms described above. If any develop, the individual must immediately self-isolate, contact their healthcare provider and the Saratoga County Public Health Services (SCHPS) at (518) 885-2276. However, in a true medical emergency, the individual should first call 911.
 - **Social Distancing:** The individual should stay at least 6 feet from other people; avoid crowds, poorly ventilated spaces, and public transportation, ridesharing, or taxis. When indoors, the individual should ensure adequate indoor ventilation whenever possible by opening windows and doors.
 - **Personal hygiene and environmental cleaning:** The individual should wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds (or use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol), especially after using the restroom, before preparing food, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. The individual should also clean and disinfect high touch surfaces frequently.

Availability and Processing Time of Early Release Requests

A variety of circumstances influence whether permitting early release from quarantine is appropriate or practical. SCPHS retains the right to suspend the early release option at any time, either individually or universally, and cannot guarantee the speed with which any request for early release will be reviewed and processed.

Factors affecting the early release option's availability include, but are not limited to, the following:

- **First Come, First Served Basis:** Requests for early release are accepted and reviewed on a first come, first served basis, meaning that SCPHS processes requests in order of their receipt.
- **Availability of Diagnostic Testing Resources:** Testing for the purpose of earlier discontinuation of quarantine will be considered only when it will have no impact on community diagnostic testing. Testing of persons seeking evaluation for infection will be prioritized.
- **Local Transmission Patterns:** SCPHS may deny early release requests owing to local transmission patterns that, in its assessment, warrant a more cautious quarantine strategy.
- **Individual Risk Profile:** SCPHS may deny early release requests based on an assessment of the individual's unique transmission risk (e.g., interaction with vulnerable populations or in vulnerable settings, etc.).
- **Public Health Staffing and Resource Capacity:** To protect the health and safety of county residents, SCPHS will continue to prioritize case investigation, contact tracing, vaccination and other COVID-19 response activities.

Process for Early Release

Individuals under quarantine who meet all early release criteria, should fax or email proof of identity (e.g. driver's license of the individual or of the parent/guardian); if applicable, a copy of their negative viral test result with all required information; and SCPHS' Request to Reduce Quarantine Using Symptom Monitoring and Diagnostic Testing Form and Attestation to 518-363-8988 or quarantinereleaserequest@saratogacountyny.gov. Persons requesting reduced quarantine using symptom monitoring and diagnostic testing can also mail their request to SCPHS at 6012 County Farm Road, Ballston Spa, NY 12020. Requests made by phone will not be accepted.

Individuals seeking release from quarantine earlier than 14 days must remain in quarantine until they receive notification from SCPHS that their request has been approved or have an official release letter from SCPHS.

The voluntary disclosure of personal information to SCPHS, whether solicited or unsolicited, constitutes consent to the collection and disclosure of the information by SCPHS for the purposes for which the user disclosed the information to SCPHS. Please keep in mind that SCPHS cannot guarantee the confidentiality of information submitted by outside parties during transmission by fax or email. Communications sent by fax or email may not be secure and although unlikely, there is a possibility that information you include in an email or fax can be read by other parties. Submission of information to SCPHS, including information related to the process for early release as outlined above, by fax or email shall constitute an acknowledgment of this warning and election to transmit information in the manner selected.

Privacy Disclosure

SCPHS is strongly committed to protecting personal information collected through this website against unauthorized access, use or disclosure. Consequently, SCPHS limits employee access to personal information collected through this website to only those employees who need access to the information in the performance of their official duties. Employees who have access to this information follow appropriate procedures in connection with any disclosures of personal information. In addition, SCPHS has implemented procedures to safeguard the integrity of its information technology assets, including, but not limited to, authentication, monitoring, auditing, and encryption. These security procedures have been integrated into the design, implementation, and day-to-day operations of this website as part of our continuing commitment to the security of electronic content as well as the electronic transmission of information.

SCPHS may collect or disclose personal information without consent if the collection or disclosure is: (1) necessary to perform the statutory duties of the SCPHS, or necessary for SCPHS to operate a program authorized by law, or authorized by state or federal statute or regulation; (2) made pursuant to a court order or by law; (3) for the purpose of validating the identity of the user; or (4) of information to be used solely for statistical purposes that is in a form that cannot be used to identify any particular person.